

tion is to my mind irrelevant after what I just said. But the newspaper has the duty to inform on major questions. It must be a mirror to society and even if society isn't particularly pleased in seeing that it has warts on its face, it should remain a mirror.

Now, in the editorial part, I do think that it is presumptuous that newspapermen, editorial writers, should try at the same time to enlighten and lead public opinion. That is why I have always been in favour of signed editorials—which is not in the British tradition, I understand, but very much in the French tradition of newspapers—because then you have the exact proportion of the importance of what you are reading. It is Mr. So-and-So's views and not the views of a newspaper that has a circulation of 40,000 or 400,000. It is one individual's, but a professional person's, opinion on a certain matter and there I think it is presumptuous. But I think it is part of the trade that the editorial writer should say, "Well, this is my job—I am supposed to look ahead and I have more time to think about these things and I am supposed to take the risk of expressing my own opinion and pretending it is the right one." I don't think this can be avoided.

**The Chairman:** I think perhaps you might be able to answer this question quite briefly. In your opinion, is there an "establishment" which controls the mass media in Canada, or any one of the media?

**Mr. Pelletier:** I read this question when you sent me this document and I am very embarrassed to answer a question like that because I never could really define to my own satisfaction what an "establishment" is.

**The Chairman:** You will be delighted to know that many of the publishers gave us that same answer.

**Mr. Pelletier:** Yes.

**Mr. Fortier:** It is when you become part of that establishment that it is difficult!

**Mr. Pelletier:** I certainly wouldn't go along with the opinion that there is a mafia of opinion manipulators in Canada who meet secretly in the dark in the Rideau Club every week and say "What is it that we can put on to the Canadian public?" On the other hand, it is fairly obvious that, with the concentration of the printed press particularly, there is a small number of people who control a vast proportion of the information and editorial writing in this country. So I suppose you may say that never have so few had so great an influence on so many. In this sense there is certainly an

"establishment". But I put it in quotation marks because the exact meaning of this question I couldn't define to my own satisfaction.

**The Chairman:** Marshall McLuhan says that television sounds the death knell of print. And there is also a quotation here by Mr. Walter Lippmann—I am sure you saw this quotation—where he says, "Television is adding to the irrationality of the world. It makes everything simpler or more dramatic or more immediate than it is. If you listen to television you cannot find out what is going on in the world. News on television is very good; but you can't live on what they give you. So newspapers are here to stay."—In asking you to comment on this and on Marshall McLuhan's statement I am reminded of a speech you made, and please correct me if I am wrong. I think you made a speech in London, Ontario, in the past year in which you tended to agree with McLuhan, didn't you?

**Mr. Pelletier:** I did but I would make some distinctions. I agree with this opinion of Mr. McLuhan to the extent, and this is the opinion that I was expressing—I was saying that from now on, a dictator in a country who would want to manipulate public opinion efficiently without becoming too odious, could very well let the free press, the printed press, operate and television would be enough to manipulate public opinion. And I was projecting into the future that I think this will become more and more true if the present trend in development goes on.

I was very much impressed personally by the fact that every time there was a major strike in major newspapers either in New York or in Canada the papers that were struck lost some circulation. Part of it was picked up by other newspapers; part of it was gained back after the newspaper went into operation again; but part of it never was picked up by anyone. This means that on every one of these occasions—and God knows over the last ten years how many strikes there have been in New York and Montreal and Toronto and Windsor, and all these places—it means that over the decade—I can't give you any statistics because it is certainly an estimate, but there certainly are, in my opinion, hundreds of thousands of people who just gave away the habit of reading a newspaper. They might read a news magazine, they might pick up a paper sometime on occasion. You see the circulation going up very sharply, for instance, when there is a moon shot or a general election, or something like that. I don't think we can avoid the fact that newspaper readers are diminishing in proportion, though not in absolute terms. With